

DOS Review Completed

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *Feb*

INFORMATION

May 3, 1969

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Statement by Prince Sihanouk on U.S. Border Declaration

Prince Sihanouk, at an April 30 press conference, has taken exception to the U.S. border declaration as useless, valueless and deceptive, on the basis of interpretations of this declaration in the New York Times and Washington Post. Secretary Rogers has sent you the attached memorandum (Tab A) based on early versions of the Sihanouk statement. Later versions and a report from the Australian Ambassador in Phnom Penh (Tab B) would indicate that Sihanouk rejected our border declaration at the press conference.

Sihanouk's basic complaint is that we have not accepted Cambodia's borders as defined by it in our border declaration. However, in explaining the U.S. border declaration to Sihanouk, the Australian Ambassador made clear that this was not our intention. Sihanouk has accepted border declarations by other countries on this basis.

The French Ambassador in Phnom Penh has also informed the Australian Ambassador that Sihanouk rejected the idea of resuming relations with the U.S. at the press conference. The French Ambassador, considered a shrewd judge of Sihanouk, has concluded that Sihanouk is using the border declaration as a pretext for not resuming diplomatic relations. He thinks that Sihanouk may have been influenced to change his mind on relations with the U.S. after seeing the extent of North Vietnamese control in the Northeast, in Ratanakiri (see map at Tab C). Sihanouk may have concluded that he was powerless to prevent North Vietnamese infiltration and the only course open to him was to seek an understanding with the Vietnamese Communists. Sihanouk had just returned on April 30 from a week's visit to the Northeast.

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TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

April 30, 1969

SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Cambodian Reactions to Press Commentary
on U.S. Border Declaration

Summary:

While continuing his verbal attacks on Communist use of Cambodian territory, Prince Sihanouk has taken exception to press comments about the U.S. declaration on Cambodia's frontiers. He is reported to have reacted to such press comments by rejecting the declaration in a Cambodian-language press conference April 30. We had anticipated possible Cambodian reactions along these lines, and are making no comment. We do not yet have the full text of Sihanouk's press conference, and do not yet know whether it will represent a major obstacle to resumption of relations.

Background:

Since our border declaration April 16, Prince Sihanouk and his controlled press have stepped up their attacks on VC/NVA use of Cambodian territory. Sihanouk, for instance, claimed he was unable to visit an outlying part of north-eastern Cambodia which has fallen under Communist control, and announced orders to the Cambodian Army to retake the area.

On the other hand, speaking April 25 in Cambodian, Sihanouk said, "Yesterday I received news from Washington that the United States has indeed recognized our frontiers

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and that a representative of the Washington administration had described U.S. recognition of the Khmer frontiers as a normal gesture. However, he added that the U.S. would have nothing to do with any disputes arising as a result of Cambodia's neighbors . . . claiming certain parts of Khmer territory, since the borders . . . are almost undefined. If they (the Americans) have in fact made such ambiguous statements, I will categorically refuse to exchange diplomats and will consider U.S. recognition of our frontiers null and void." In his April 30 press conference, of which we have only a summary and a few brief excerpts, Sihanouk read articles from the Washington Post and the New York Times, and remarked that the U.S. declaration is useless, valueless and deceptive because, according to the New York Times, the recognition is vague and does not indicate which frontiers are in question. Sihanouk then declares, "That is why as of today Cambodia rejects the declaration of frontier recognition by the U.S. Government. . . . It accepted it because it did not know (words indistinct). Now it knows and it rejects it." He added that if any of the other countries which have issued border declarations have similar reservations, he will break relations with them.

As the press conference is in Cambodian, it may possibly fall within Sihanouk's peculiar ground rules, which provide that anything he says in Cambodian is for internal consumption only, and not for foreign ears. However, the Cambodian news agency carried an accurate summary in French of his April 25 speech, and Radio Phnom Penh April 29 broadcast a French-language commentary along similar lines.

Analysis:

We had anticipated that Sihanouk might react in this way to any official explanation or commentary on the border declaration, and have therefore been careful to avoid any such statements. His reaction to the press

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speculation reflects his extreme sensitivity to press coverage of Cambodia. (His UN Ambassador cables summaries--not always entirely accurate ones--and excerpts of relevant U.S. press reports.) Before issuing the declaration, we made sure that he understood its implications, and also explained that we would not comment on the declaration itself or on interpretations which the Cambodian or other governments might place on it.

We are carefully noting his reactions, and we shall continue to make no comment either on the Cambodian statements or on our own declaration. Your message acknowledging his thanks for the border declaration, and indicating agreement that we should move toward normalization of relations, was delivered April 28 to his private secretariat, and its contents were reported April 29 by Radio Phnom Penh.

We have asked the Australians to tell the Cambodians that we are prepared to send Elden B. Erickson, FSO-3, to Phnom Penh to begin making administrative arrangements for the opening of a small U.S. Mission. He will be ready to leave May 7 if the Australians and Cambodians agree.


William P. Rogers

SECRET

may 1, 1969
time 3:15 p.m.

IMMEDIATE
CONFIDENTIAL

011430LT

ADDRESSED CANBERRA 713, WASHINGTON 265.
UNITED STATES/CAMBODIAN RELATIONS.

Action EA/LC

S/S-3
EA-5

Info copies to: J-1
W4-1

THIS MORNING I SAW FRENCH AMBASSADOR DAUGE WHO RETURNED
YESTERDAY FROM A FORTNIGHT IN PEKING).

HE HAD HEARD TAPE-RECORDING OF SIHANOUK'S PRESS CONFERENCE
YESTERDAY AUDIENCE AT WHICH HE SAID COMPRISED FRENCH A.F.P.,
U.P.I. AND A.K.P. CORRESPONDENTS.

THERE HAD BEEN THREE THEMES

A) TRIBUTED TO DE GAULLE., B) REJECTION OF UNITED STATES BORDER
DECLARATIONS ON BASIS OF UNITED STATES RESERVATIONS AS THEY HAD BEEN
REFLECTED IN NEW YORK TIMES AND WASHINGTON POST REPORTS., AND
REJECTION OF IDEA OF RESUMING RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES., AND
C) SERIOUSNESS OF SITUATION IN RATANAKIRI PROVINCE.

DAUGE SAID THAT AT ONE STAGE ONE OF THE JOURNALISTS PRESENT HAD
SUGGESTED TO SIHANOUK THAT IF HE SUSPECTED THAT THE UNITED STATES
HAD RESERVATIONS ABOUT BORDER DECLARATION HE SHOULD SEEK CLARIFICAT-
ION FROM UNITED STATES.

AT THIS SIHANOUK BECAME ANGRY AND SAID THAT JOURNALIST DID
NOT UNDERSTAND THAT CAMBODIA'S TERRITORY WAS A STAKE AND THAT HE
FELT JUST AS FRENCH HAD DONE OVER ALSACE AND LORRAINE.

2. DAUGE PLEASE PROTECT) TOOK SIHANOUK'S ANGER OVER JOURNALIST'S
SUGGESTION AS INDICATING THAT SIHANOUK'S ALLEGATIONS OF U.S. RESERVES
BORDER DECLARATION WERE PRIMARLY A PRETEXT FOR NOT PROCEEDING
WITH RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS DECLARATION AND
RESUMPTION ALWAYS HAVING BEEN CLOSELY LINKED IN SIHANOUK'S

Distribution:

PRIME MINISTER MR HEWITT SIR JAMES PLIMSOLL HE WPH CGW(A)
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MIND.

DAUGE CONSIDERED THAT IN PERIOD BETWEEN TWO PRESS CONFERENCE ON 16 AND 30 APRIL SIHANOUK MAY HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED TO CHANGE HIS MIND ON RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES BY SEEING FOR HIMSELF THE EXTENT OF VIETNAMESE CONTROL IN RATANAKIRI PROVINCE AND ALSO BY PRESSURES FROM MEMBERS OF HIS ENTOURAGE.

SITUATION IN RATANKIRI PROVINCES MAY HAVE LED SIHANOUK TO CONCLUDE AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING THAT HE WAS POWERLESS TO PREVENT VIETNAMESE INFILTRATIONS WITH CAMBODIA AND THAT ONLY COURSE OPEN TO HIM WAS TO SEEK SOME UNDERSTANDING WITH VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS THAT IS ONLY COURSE SHORT OF MASSIVE UNITED STATES MILITARY HELP WHICH HAD NOT BEEN OFFERED AND WHICH WOULD TURN CAMBODIA INTO ANOTHER VIETNAM).

3. DAUGE SAID THAT THERE HAD ALWAYS BEEN CONTRADICTORY ELEMENTS IN SIHANOUK'S POLICIES AND THEIR EXISTENCE FAVOURED RAPID CHANGES OF TACK SUCH AS WE WERE NOW EXPERIENCING.

ALTHOUGH HE CONSIDERED THAT FOR THE TIME BEING SIHANOUK HAD EXCLUDED POSSIBILITY OF RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES, DAUGE FELT THAT SITUATION MIGHT WELL CHANGE AGAIN IN A MONTH'S TIME.

HE ALSO CONSIDERED THAT OTHER ASPECTS OF SIHANOUK'S POLICIES (EG INTERNAL ECONOMIC POLICY AND PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL ORGANISATIONS) ASSOCIATED WITH RAPPROCHMENT WITH UNITED STATES WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE CHANGED AS RESULT OF SIHANOUK'S PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY.

IBRD MISSION IS HERE NOW AND WILL BE SEEING US SATURDAY).

FEAKES.

